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Service of Posts and Telegraphs. Before 1900, Upper Laos paid Tonkin a yearly sum of 157,500 francs for the service of posts and telegraphs.

Lower Laos had an appropriation in its budget for wages, personnel housing, new construction, maintenance of lines, etc., and this rose to 165,295 francs in 1898.

Since 1900 the general budget has covered the service of posts and telegraphs in unified Laos. [279] [Illustration] [280] [Blank page]

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[281] Public education. An appropriation of 13,750 francs is written into the 1900 budget for public education. This is a negligible expense, yet the results achieved in the Franco-Laotian schools are satisfactory. The Superior Resident writes as follows:

"Primary schools in which the elements of the French language are taught to the natives are in operation at Luang-Prabang, Vien-Tiane, Khong and in all the province capitals. There students are given basic training by an interpreter who is appointed for the purpose and for whom a salary is appropriated. As soon as they can read and write fluently the most intelligent pupils are sent to the College Chasseloup-Laubat in Saigon, where they continue their studies for two or three years to perfect their knowledge. Under this system we shall shortly have a good body of interpreters for the administration and for private enterprise" (1).

(1) Le Laos français, op. cit. [Lieutenant-colonel Tournier (Superior Resident in Laos), "Notice sur le Laos français," in Revue indochinoise, Hanoi, 1900.]

Some students from the Laotian primary schools have even been sent to the Colonial School in Paris.

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Apostolic missions.

"The missionaries who endeavor to evangelize the peoples of Laos all belong to the French Foreign Missions Society [Missions Étrangères de France]. Some are attached to the bishop of Bangkok (2).

(2) Since 1900 the missions of Laos have been under the direction of a bishop of Laos, Msgr. Cuaz, whose temporary residence is at Nong-Sene, two kilometers to the north of Lakhone.

and these are the ones whom one meets on the banks of the Mekong.

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Tax on rice, paddy, horns, hides, etc.

	Per picul (francs)	Per hundred kilograms (francs)
Paddy	0.25	0.416
Rice	0.50	0.832
Gum lac	2.50	4.16
Chinese nettle	2.50	4.16
Buffalo horns and hides	2.50	4.16
Buck horns and hides	3.75	6.25
Anteater scales	3.75	6.25
Cardamom	5.00	8.32
Elephant and tiger bones	3.75	6.25
Benzoin	12.50	20.82
Rubber	12.50	20.82
Wax	12.50	20.82
Ivory	50.00	83.20
Pirogues	ten percent ad valorem.	

Also to be added are certain incidental receipts, such as those arising from chancery fees or those collected by the native tribunals in conformity with the rates scheduled by the code of Vien-Tiane.

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The royal treasury of Luang-Prabang subsidizes certain expenses, such as the upkeep of the kingdom's militia, of the native hospital in Luang-Prabang, of the Franco-Laotian school in Luang-Prabang, etc. [504]

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Finally, the general budget of Indo-China pays out a variable sum annually for the purpose of balancing the receipts and expenditures of Laos.

C. Opium

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One of the most important sources of Laotian revenue is provided by the sale of opium. The administration is responsible for the sale of this substance, which it manufactures itself and which is marketed by licensed merchants acting as middlemen.

Before 1900, Laos sold on its own behalf the opium which was allotted to it by the Cochinchina Customs and Excise Office (1),

(1) This was true only for Lower Laos. The opium sold in Upper Laos came from the Luang-Prabang distillery, which is no longer in operation today.